



Timothy Eaton comes across in the recollections of early employees as a stern patriarch. But there are many instances of personal kindness and there is no doubt of his concern for their welfare.

induced to try it.

He wrote his own early advertising—and struck a common chord. An early catalogue asked customers to write, even if only to complain. One customer asked Mrs. Eaton to try sheet music on her melodeon before sending it; another asked advice on hat trimming. Just before World War II, a sourdough from the northwest came to the Queen St. store and asked to

see “that Mr. Eaton I’ve been writing to all these years.”

Major departments grew from small ideas.

The furniture department began after a section head, looking around for furniture for his new house, realized how much cheaper he could get it if Eaton’s sold furniture.

The grocery department got its beginning in selling nuts at Hallow-

e’en. Raisins were added for Christmas, then tea, then tinned goods.

A 16-foot counter was set up to dispense ice cream and sodas during the summer months. This required cream; Timothy Eaton set up a farm with 20 milk cows at Islington. Then he asked, what to do with the cream in the cold weather. Somebody suggested oyster stew. Space was set aside and 500 bowls of oyster stew a day were served at 10 cents a bowl. Pie was added, then tea, finally a 25-cent dinner. Now Eaton’s across Canada in more than 50 restaurants and snack bars serves more than 20 million people a year.

Outside the store, Timothy’s life was church and family. But it was tinged with tragedy, for all his success. Three of his eight children died in infancy, one by drowning. The eldest son, Edward, by all accounts a business genius and Timothy’s heir apparent, died of diabetes at 37.

Timothy himself was thrown from his carriage and crippled in 1899 when his high-spirited horses shied on the way home from his Islington farm.

Although he would not permit dancing at home or go to plays, he spent a small fortune to build the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, in tribute to his wife, who everybody said could have been a fine actress.

The couple spent much time at their Lake Rousseau property, Ravenscrag—where they built six cottages for their family. Timothy’s yacht, Wanda, was famous on the lakes. He travelled thousands of miles in his private railroad car, Eatonia.

When he died in 1907, the tiny business he founded had become Canada’s Greatest Store. The massive Winnipeg branch had been opened. Mail order was a separate unit. Eaton’s had its own buying offices around the world.

The firm had 9,000 employees. Timothy’s fortune was estimated at anywhere from \$3,000,000 to \$15 million.

Sales that year totalled \$22,428,000.

There were more than 200 carriages in his funeral procession; a huge floral display included a wreath from each of the 125 departments in his Toronto store.

In Winnipeg, at the word of his death, “the flag was dropped to half-mast and gently the would-be purchasers were shown to the streets.”

## How Eaton’s catalogue made it from the privy to the coffee table

★ *They called the Eaton catalogue The Farmer’s Bible: It provided necessities, supplied dreams, helped create desires. Now its customer is the suburban housewife in one of the new revolutions of retailing. This is the third in a series of articles on the 100th anniversary of the T. Eaton Co.*

Half a century ago, the people at Eaton’s mail order received an angry complaint from a homesteader in northern Saskatchewan.

The bathtub he’d ordered had been damaged in transit. There was a hole in it.

Another bathtub was shipped off immediately.

Back came another, even more indignant letter. What were they doing down there in Toronto? The same darned thing had happened, a hole in the same place.

Even the mail order people, who expected the unexpected, were puzzled, until one suddenly realized the answer. They wrote the homesteader:

Every bathtub had a hole—for a drain.

The surest way to make George Griner, Eaton’s catalogue manager, or Bill McCourt, his top associate, wince is to go on about the days when Eaton’s catalogue was The Farmer’s Bible.

Each is the very model of the modern merchandising manager. And they are quick to stress that in the last 15 years the image of catalogue order has changed.

Catalogue selling, says McCourt, is now one “of the more dynamic areas of merchandising.” The catalogue is a sophisticated outlet aimed at a sophisticated customer,

# THE "CHATHAM" VACUUM CLEANER



Operated  
By  
Hand  
Power

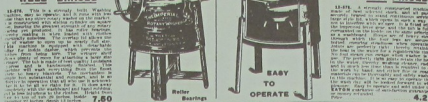
25<sup>00</sup>

A Boy  
or Girl  
Can  
Pump It

K1-032. The Chatham Vacuum Cleaner consists of a very powerful, though very compact suction pump, a tank with dust trap on the interior, a good length of rubber hose, a brass tube and a peculiar flattened nozzle. The work is done by a lever that a ten year old child can push and pull for an hour at a time. The cleaner will get any room or any house really clean in one-fifth the time and with one-tenth the labor that the old way takes to get it even partly clean. It weighs about 30 pounds and can be conveniently carried from room to room. Built of best material throughout—is strong and substantial. Price

25<sup>00</sup>

**ABOLISH THE DRUDGERY OF WASHDAY**  
**THE IMPROVED ROTARY WELL BRACED** **750**  
**THE TORONTO WASHER** **425**  
**VERY LOW PRICED**



## A LABOR-SAVING WASHER

14-101. This Wash-er Machine, mounted on a sturdy cast-iron stand, is a most efficient labor-saving device. The agitator is driven by a hand crank, and the clothes are washed in a large tub. The machine is built of heavy material and is guaranteed to last for years. Price



**"THE UNIVERSAL"** **490 GUARANTEED FOR THREE YEARS**  
**WRINGER AND TUB STAND** **700**  
**THE "GUARANTEE"** **550 GUARANTEED FOR FIVE YEARS**



## SOME INTERESTING VALUES IN MEN'S AND BOYS' BATHING SUITS

### BOYS' BATHING SUITS



E1-8124. Men's Imported Cotton Combination Bathing Suits, striped bodies, as cut, buttoned down front, 1/2 sleeves, low neck. Sizes 34 to 41. Special value per suit. **35c** Add sizes as above. **60c** Do not fail to give size



E1-8126. Men's Imported Two-piece Cotton Bathing Suits, 1/2 sleeves, low neck, striped bodies, as cut. We feel that we can recommend this line. Size 34 to 41, per suit. **1.00** Do not fail to give size



E1-8130. Boys' Imported Combination Suits, buttoned down front, 1/2 sleeves, striped bodies, exceptionally good value. Size 22 to 32, per suit. **25c** E1-8132. Same style as above, only better quality. Sizes 22 to 32, per suit. **35c** Do not fail to give size



E1-8134. Boys' Imported Cotton Bathing Suits, navy blue, sleeves, buttoned on shoulder. Sizes 22 to 32, each. **25c** E1-8136. Same style, only all wool cashmere. Per suit. **75c** Do not fail to give size



E1-8137. Men's Fine Imported Cashmere Two-piece Bathing Suit, a fine light weight garment, in navy blue or black. Size 34 to 41. Per suit. **1.50** Do not fail to give size



E1-8138. Boys' Cotton Suits, can be used for cardigan purposes. 1/2 sleeves, buttoned with 2 val lace at cardigan trimmings, also in blue finished with new old neck. Sizes 22 to 32. Special price, each. **81c** E1-8140. Men's sizes, 34 and colors as above. Special price, each.

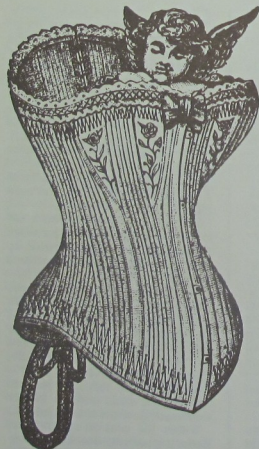
See page 96 for other Boys' Goods



# For Happy Daughters in Summer Waters



Price \$1.50 a pair.



CORALINE.—Price \$1 and \$1.25 a pair.



**A**—A very practical Annette Kellerman bathing suit is made of all-wool, and comes in black, scarlet or Copen. It features the basted releasing pleat to give extra fullness at the back. Sizes 36 to 44, \$5.95.

**E**—Much in the foreground of the Mode, as well as of the sketch, this lady in her Fanteen bathing suit with rubber shoulder button and contrasting stripes at skirt. Comes in blue, cardinal, pansy, black, navy, and emerald. Sizes 34 to 38, \$4.95; sizes 40 to 48, \$5.75.

**B**—You can be sure of finding a becoming color in this Penman's knit bathing suit of all-wool, with double button fastener on shoulder, and contrasting bands of color. Comes in powder, emerald, and scarlet. Sizes 34 to 44 in the lot, \$2.95.

**C**—If you fancy a rather swagger bathing suit, you'll favor this neatly fitting style of wool, with broad bands of white and color. It has single dome fastener at shoulder. Comes in orange, scarlet, Copen, black and navy with white stripes. Sizes 36 to 42, \$3.50.

**Bathing Capes and Caps**  
**F**—Exceedingly comfortable, very smart, and very moderately priced, are the knitted beach capes. The one sketched is finely knit, and is available in shades of scarlet, orange, emerald, or Copen, blue, with white collar. Sizes 36 to 40, \$10.00.

The piquant bathing caps at figures B and C, which will be tied at the back when bathing, are of brilliantly-colored and patterned rubberised satin in many colors. Price, \$5.00.

**D**—No fear of catching cold when one wears such a well made bathing suit of pure wool. It is hand-finished, and was knit in Vancouver, and comes in navy, emerald, black or Copen, with narrow bands of contrasting color at the brief shirt hem. Sizes 36 to 42, \$3.95.

Bathing Suits, Fourth Floor, Centre

# T. EATON & CO.

190, 192, 194, 196 Yonge Street,  
TORONTO.

Thirty-five distinct and different departments, constituting a complete world's fair.

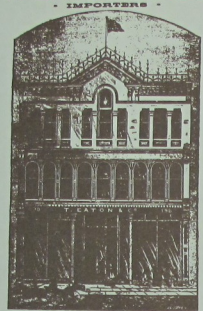
Colored Dress Goods.  
Black and Mourning Goods.

Silks.  
Velvets.  
Linen.  
Oxfords.  
Flannels.  
Blankets.  
Mantles.  
Oostumes.  
Children's Mantles.  
Cloths.  
Furs.  
Millinery.  
Ladies' Underwear.  
Jerseys.  
Corsets.

Knitted Goods.  
Ladies' Fine Shoes.  
Gloves.  
Umbrellas.  
Hosiery.  
Laces.  
Ribbons.  
Neckwear.  
Jewellery.  
Buttons.  
Dress Trimmings.  
Notions.  
Gents' Furnishings.  
Carpets.  
Curtains.  
Oil-cloths.  
House Furnishings.  
Trunks and Valises.

SEE INSIDE OF COVER

# T. EATON & CO.

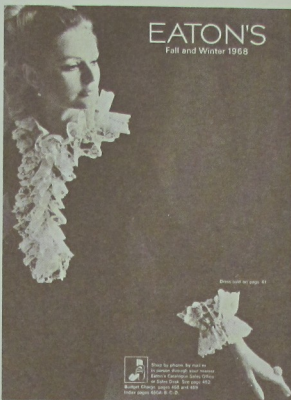


Nos. 190, 192, 194, 196 YONGE STREET, TORONTO, ONT.

SEE INSIDE OF COVER

# EATON'S

Fall and Winter 1959



See photos of the new  
fashions in the  
catalogue  
Nos. 190, 192, 194, 196  
Yonge Street, Toronto, Ont.  
Order today before it's too late

The Eaton catalogue has come a long way since the early homesteaders dubbed it "the Bible" more than half a century ago. To the families of yesteryear the Ea-

ton's mail order book provided the necessities — and some dreams — of life. Each year some 18 million copies are mailed to housewives across the country.

the middle-class urban and suburban housewife.

Most of the 18 million copies of the nine catalogues a year go to her — and the customer still on the farm is sophisticated, too. Her needs and desires are virtually indistinguishable from those of the city dweller.

In a phrase McCourt avoids, the catalogue has moved from the privy to the coffee table.

All true.

But the fact is the old Eaton's catalogue is one of the meaningful artifacts of Canadian social history. Copies repose in municipal museums in Zar, Alta., and points east and west. It's been micro-filmed for libraries, reproduced in history books.

On lonely homesteads, it was literature, the source of dreams—"the Wishing Book," Indians called it, in a felicitous phrase.

When Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Herbert of Red Deer, Alta., celebrated their 64th anniversary two years ago, they recalled the early homesteading days. They would come to tiny Red Deer just twice a year for their staples and get all their other needs from Mr. Eaton down in Toronto.

Eaton's couldn't supply everything, of course.

An Eskimo on Herschel Island in the Arctic once wrote for an afternoon frock he saw modelled in the catalogue.

After it arrived, he complained bitterly:

"Where is the woman?"

Immigrants learned to read English by matching words with catalogue pictures. As recently as 18 years ago, when Mrs. J. M. Tremblay moved to Niagara Falls from Quebec, her only English words were: "I don't know."

She spread Eaton's catalogue on the floor, had neighbor's children identify articles in English and practised the words until she felt confident.

A priest in northern Manitoba once wrote Eaton's president, J. C. Eaton, asking if he could spare 12 copies "most urgently needed for the instruction of the children of the parish."

In lonely homes, the arrival of the new catalogue, the long nights of careful poring over what could be afforded, finally the arrival of the big box from Eaton's, were precious moments.

Father considered the things of

interest to him (in 1910, special ox harness, \$9.85), Mother the women's things (Seven Sutherland Sisters' Hair Promoter, 80 cents).

Often she'd sigh regretfully over the hats and combs and the like and stick to the "practical" things.

The catalogue, wrote CBC producer Harry Boyle, a boy from rural Ontario, even had a special smell.

Everyone, Boyle recalled, knew what you paid for things, since everyone had an Eaton's catalogue. After a wedding or other gathering, women couldn't wait to get home to look up the new hats or dresses worn by the other girls.

When the catalogue was superseded by a new one, it began a second life. Girls would use it for a cut-out book, boys for shin pads in hockey. Color pages might be boiled down to provide coloring for Easter eggs. Youngsters played "Eatonia," a homebrew game in which the pages would be turned and points were scored by the first to slap his hand on the Eaton trade-mark.

Ten years ago the catalogue may have saved an Indian's life. The old man, near The Pas in Manitoba, had a temperature of 103 degrees,

little heat and no hot water bottle. He heated the catalogue in his stove and used it as a warming pad.

The first Eaton's catalogue was a 32-page booklet distributed at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition in 1884. This was 10 years after Montgomery Ward's first catalogue in the U.S., three years ahead of R. W. Sears, whose firm later became Sears-Roebuck.

It invited people to drop in at Timothy Eaton's store, "a complete world's fair."

Timothy didn't really have the facilities for the mail orders which resulted. They were handled by store clerks, going from counter to counter.

The late Mrs. Emily Cowley, who began working at Eaton's in 1885, was glad to be assigned to the mail orders. She'd been selling stockings, which, since Timothy stocked only two colors, black and white, "weren't very interesting."

Several years ago, she recalled how people would send in foot or shoe tracings when ordering shoes.

Within the next 20 or 30 years, Eaton's gradually developed a separate mail order department, reduced qualifications for free ship-



ment to orders as low as \$5 and offered to pay shipping charges on the return of unsatisfactory merchandise.

Timothy Eaton insisted on a completely accurate description of goods. As McCourt says today: "It would be suicide for us not to describe our merchandise fully and accurately."

And he hit upon the right note for a folksy relationship with mail customers.

The 1887 catalogue urged store visitors, who might be driven from the train, to use Eaton's toilet rooms—"wash as often as you please...."

In 1890, the catalogue conceded that orders could be made, "but we promptly and cheerfully correct them if you write to us. Try to write us a good-natured letter, but if you cannot, then write to us anyway."

Fading letters in Eaton's archive show how people did like to write to "Mr. Eaton."

A Quebec resident wrote a long and blistering complaint that the legs hadn't come with his stove.

At the bottom, a P.S.: "I found the legs in the oven."

He mailed the letter anyway.

One customer sent Mrs. Timothy Eaton a basket of plums in appreciation of the store's services.

Some letters were touching, and some tinged with mystery.

From a lighthouse off Prince Edward Island came an order for a woman's evening dress and several pairs of men's black socks, the sort that go with formal wear.

Eaton's still has a 1952 letter from a Hamilton man:

"Dear sirs,

"I am told the T. Eaton Co. can furnish any thing asked for. Now I lost my wife over a year ago and I am very lonely living alone. Can you send me a woman not too old. I own my own house here. I have \$67 a month income."

A London, Ont., journalist once pondered the effect of the Eaton catalogue on changing Canadian life.

He observed that the illustrations "importuned many a young man to quit the farm. When he looked at those elegant young men in their smart ready-to-wears, and when he saw just across on the other page those lovely ladies clad in the fashionable suitings for young city girls, he was ready to divorce himself from the farm."

The mail order also irritated some small merchants. R. Y. Eaton, Eaton's third president, told of

the man in St. Mary's, Ont., in the early 1880s, who asked his local storekeeper the price of an axe, "\$2," the merchant said.

"I can get it from Eaton's for \$1.75," the customer said.

"Oh," said the storekeeper resignedly, "give me \$1.75." He rang up the sale, wrapped the axe, put it on a shelf and said "Call in at a week's time and I'll give you the axe."

A glance at old catalogues shows prices forever gone and items almost forgotten today—middles and hug-me-tights, spatees and huckabacks.

In 1894, you could buy a man's single-breasted suit for \$3.50, a solid oak, 96-inch extension dining table for \$10.50.

In 1911, an eight-room three-story house was offered for \$895. Violins in "Strad" or "Guarn" models in 1893 were \$6 each. (Some years later, Don Messer bought his first fiddle from Eaton's catalogue when he was 7 years old.)

The 1916 catalogue offered gramophone records like "Bounce Me, John, I've Rubber Heels On."

For \$10 in 1914, you could get the family grocery assortment: 3 cans of plums, 3 cans of peas, 3 cans of tomatoes, 2 ounces of nutmeg, 4 ounces of essence of lemon, 4 ounces of vanilla, 7 pounds of marmalade, 3 pounds of corn starch, 6 cans of corn, 1 pound of baking powder, 3 cans of catsup, 3 cans of raspberries, 1 pound of pepper, 3½ pounds of starch, 7 pounds of rice, 6 pounds of figs, 5 pounds of raisins, 7 pounds of dried peaches, 6 pounds of currants, 2 pounds of fruit peel, 3 pounds of baking soda, half a pound of pastry spice and either 5 pounds of tea or 5 pounds of coffee.

There really were such items as Cleaver's Saponaceous Tooth Powder, 30 cents; Trask's Magnetic Ointment, 20 cents; Dr. William's Pink Pills, 35 cents a box.

Today, the horse population is dwindling and the catalogue's harness section has disappeared.

Catalogue selling is a new game. Eaton's Catalogue Distribution Centre at Eglinton and Warden Avenues has enough floor space for 47 hockey rinks. A computer is used to handle billing and to guide restocking of high-selling items.

Most business is done in urban and suburban areas. Most of the mail order's more than 40,000 items are the same as the merchandise in stores.

The two big slick spring and fall catalogues out of the nine annual books cost Eaton's about \$2 a copy

to produce and distribute. The catalogues have a circulation of about 2,000,000 each—a list purged every 18 months to drop those persons obviously not using the catalogue.

Statistics are awesome: the 1966 fall and winter book was 812 pages; the editor of the *Palmerston Observer* reckoned the paper in the 1967 edition would last his newspaper 1,309 years; it's been estimated one edition would make a stack 25 miles high.

The catalogue has to be planned more than a year ahead. Initial planning for this month's catalogue began in November, 1967. Suppliers guarantee costs of items for the life of the catalogue, which may be 6 to 7 months.

In a time of inflation, this is sometimes a break for the mail order customer—recently one low-priced camera was \$2 less than in the store.

Telephone ordering from the catalogue is so convenient that Bill McCourt figures that by 1980 in-home shopping will be dominant, as against suburban stores.

With the new sophistication, Eaton's no longer gets the funny letters.

But some things haven't changed.

Mothers still have to hide the catalogue from their children to preserve it.

And for a few years yet, there will be persons who remember fondly the days when Kickapoo Indian Oil—honestly—could be ordered from Timothy Eaton in Toronto for 20 cents.

## The Eaton who became a knight

★ *Founder—Timothy Eaton died in 1907—but Canada's biggest retailing firm kept growing, under Timothy's son, Jack. This is the fourth in a series on the centennial of Eaton's of Canada.*

In 1910, a profile in the *Toronto Globe* quoted a "man about town"

as saying:

"Jack Eaton is the one rich man in Toronto who knows how to spend his money."

Whether it was building a factory or a hospital wing or "filling his garage with new automobiles... it is all done on the same broad-gauged, unlimited scale. He understands the economy of expenditure."

John Craig Eaton was second generation, used to money and power. Tall, broad-shouldered, handsome, clean-shaven in contrast to his father's Victorian whiskers, Jack Eaton brought a new style.

He owned Toronto's first gasoline-powered car and held Ontario's first automobile license—number 1. He made the first long distance motor trip recorded in the province, the arduous and hazardous trek from Toronto to Muskoka. He owned one of the province's first private airplanes.

His two Rolls Royces, Yellowbird and Ladybird, were familiar sights on Toronto streets.

Ladybird, now in a Florida museum, was still in use in 1940 and John Eaton's daughter, Florence Mary, rode in it when she was married that year to Frank McEachern.

(McEachern, an Eaton's public relations executive and aide to the lieutenant-governor of Ontario, remembers, incidentally, what a "traumatic experience" it was joining the formidable Eaton family. Of course, his family connections were across the street—he's a grandson of Sir Joseph Flavelle, of the Robert Simpson Co.)

Also a familiar sight was the electric runabout Jack Eaton bought his wife—and with which she managed to flatten the gates of a private girl's school.

As early as 1810, Eaton had a wireless antenna atop his Queen St. store, so he could keep in touch with his ocean-going yacht.

The yacht, *Florence*, was 172 feet overall, white with gold trimmings, had a top speed of 17 knots, sleight eight and had a crew of 18.

It was delivered in 1910, succeeding the 92-foot sailing vessel *Tekla*, which Lady Eaton—Sir John's widow—didn't count as a yacht, in her autobiography. It only slept five and had a crew of 10.

Golfers, sportsmen, good host, Eaton is remembered 46 years after his death as a man with a zest for living.

In the great hall of his Davenport Rd. mansion he had a mechanical organ, as large as the average



John Craig Eaton brought in a new style when he took over the family business from his father. Jack, a good sportsman and generous host, knew how to live. One man about town in 1910 described him as "one rich man who knows how to spend money." Jack owned first gasoline-powered car in Toronto. He was one of the first to own a private plane.

church organ, which he loved to play for guests.

When he died in 1922, The Star reported: "He had a gift for mimicry and dialect that many a stage comedian might covet, and he could tell a droll story and imitate a number of national types just as readily as he could sign his name to a cheque."

He could do that pretty readily, too.

He set the pattern for Eaton family philanthropy, with gifts totalling more than \$5,000,000—if one includes \$2,250,000 in extra wages occasioned by his decision to keep on the payroll all employees serving overseas in World War I. His philanthropies included more than \$1,000,000 to establish a chair of medicine at the University of Toronto, and the chartering of a special relief train, which he accompanied to Halifax after the 1917 disaster.

And he brought into the family a wife with an equal zest for living: Flora McCrear, a nurse from little Omeme, today still living in Toronto, the clan matriarch.

Her interests have encompassed the gracious life in Florence, Italy, direct participation in company affairs, work with the Eaton's Girls' Club, leadership of community drives and war work, sponsorship of the stage and the arts, fox hunting and conservation.

Coincidentally and fittingly, there's a racehorse on the Ontario circuit today, named Lady Eaton which has early foot and good staying power.

Aside from the T. Eaton Co. itself, Jack Eaton's most striking possession was Ardwood, the \$300,000 mansion he built on the crest of Davenport Rd. hill at Spadina, not far from Henry Pellatt's Casa Loma.

It had formal lawns and gardens, 50 rooms, 14 bathrooms (two for the master suite alone) and its own small hospital.

Ardwood, now long since razed, replaced the family's relatively small house on Walmer Rd. where Flora Eaton kept house as a bride with one maid and a weekly cleaning woman.

Lady Eaton later wrote that when her husband showed nearly completed Ardwood to his family, his small son, John David, who is now president of Eaton's, wailed: "I don't like this hotel . . . I want to go home!"

Before Ardwood was built, an architect remarked to Eaton on its splendid view: ". . . imagine being



able to look out at 450,000 people who work for you!"

This was an exaggeration—in degree.

When John Eaton took over at his father's death in 1907, the firm was solidly established and had 9,000 employees.

The Winnipeg store had been opened in a grand ceremony in 1805. Jack Eaton had been the prime mover in the expansion: he'd scouted the ground and supervised the project.

Mail order was a separate operation and Eaton's was printing its own catalogues. This began according to one memory, in 1901 when printers at the Methodist Book Room refused to handle the Eaton books.

Timothy Eaton said he'd print the catalogue himself, called in the manager of gents' furnishings, told him to get a press and typesetters.

Then electrotypes refused to handle the work, so half a dozen men's wear salesmen were trained and a complete electrotyping plant was bought and set up. The catalogue came out on time.

The firm was branching out in various directions. For instance, by 1904 Eaton's owned 600 acres of farm land and 170 milk cows to supply the lunch room which could accommodate 6,000 people in a day.

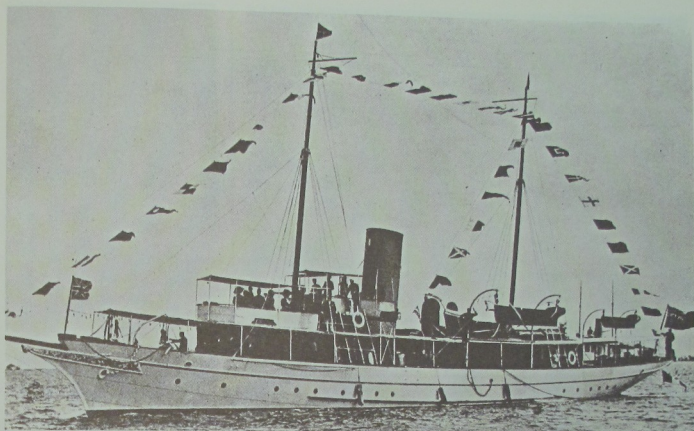
Staffers were venturesome. In 1903, an English clergyman named Barr led a colony of settlers to the hamlet which is now Saskatoon.

Eaton's Charles Band and an assistant in Toronto filled a packing case with catalogues, went by train to Regina and completed the trip to the Barr colony on a hand-managed jigger. Barr wouldn't let them distribute the catalogues.

Band asked if the Eaton's men could stay overnight. They rose at 2 a.m., quietly slipped two or three catalogues into each tent and then sped silently away into the darkness near their jigger.

At the same time, there were other Eaton traditions, which now seem old-fashioned, which were to cling for years—such as the instructions given clerks. For years there was an unwritten law that female sales workers could wear only black, brown or blue, from Sept. 15 to April 15.

A 1900 directive listed things which could be grounds for instant dismissal, headed by "assembling in groups of two or more for conversation." In 1919, an employee publication advised: "Never address each other by number or



Jack also owned an ocean-going yacht, the Florence. It wasn't the first luxury vessel owned by a Torontonian, but the 172-foot vessel was one of the biggest.

Christian name. . . . The company objects to it and it is not polite. Please get away from this and from calling each other 'dearie' and 'girlie' and the like."

Jack Eaton seems to have fitted the whole scheme of things. The late Mrs. Emily Cowley, an early employee, remembered him once at age 8 standing outside Timothy Eaton's small store urging people to see the goods inside.

After attending Upper Canada College when it was on King St. W. near Simcoe St., he worked throughout the family business before becoming president at 31.

He revered his father. He liked a smoke or a drink but in deference to his father's principles would not allow either at the store, sometimes adjoining directors' meetings to his home as a result.

But he was an innovator. In 1911 he bought what became known as the Mystery Block at College and Yonge Sts. and planned to start building the College St. store in 1914.

But World War I began and he said: "Stop the College St. building until we win the war." It was finally completed in 1930.

During the war, he paid to equip the Eaton Machine-gun Battery and gave his yacht, Florence, to the government. It was sunk off Trinidad.

Eaton returned all profits on war contracts to the government.

In 1915, he was made a knight bachelor—Sir John Eaton.

In 1919, to celebrate the firm's 50th anniversary, he announced the climax of his father's campaign for early closing—a full Saturday holiday in summer and a half holiday the rest of the year. Employees donated funds for an X-ray wing and a cot at Hospital for Sick Children.

The year after he died, Eaton's operating profit was \$7,451,000 and the Eatons were among Canada's richest people.

Yet there is a disarming ingenueness about Lady Eaton's memoir of their family life together.

In the early years after their marriage in 1901, she recalls, they would often take the five-cent, hour-long Belt Line streetcar ride around the city, go to the baseball games at Exhibition Park, picnic in High Park or in the unspoiled countryside of Davisville.

In later years, at Ardwood, guests included the opera singer Edward Johnson, comic Harry Lauder and boxer Georges Carpentier.

Lady Eaton, an amateur singer, sang with Johnson in a benefit concert at Massey Hall.

In 1920, she flew from the Royal Muskoka Hotel at Rousseau to Toronto with World War I ace Billy Bishop—a nephew of Sir John by marriage.

Then, at 45, Sir John died of pneumonia at Ardwood after a lingering seven week's illness.

He left four sons and two daughters, the oldest (Timothy) only 19, too young then to take over.

Simpsons devoted its window at Queen and Yonge Sts. to a memorial display.

Eaton's passing was noted by newspapers around the world.

The Embro, Ont., Courier published in tribute:

"Thy kindly kindness will thy tomb keep haloed in our eyes  
Till heaven ushers in the morn  
Thou'll from Mount Pleasant rise.

(signed Edith Catherine Slater, Poetess.)"

# The Eaton president who just wanted to be a mailman

★ Only one of Eaton's four presidents wasn't in the direct family line of founder Timothy Eaton. Cousin Robert Young Eaton held the fort until Timothy's grandson was ready. This is the fifth of a series of articles on the 100-year history of Canada's biggest department store.

Robert Young Eaton wanted to be a mailman—but he had to settle for being president of Eaton's.

In 1897, when he got talking to Timothy Eaton, the Uncle Who Made It in Canada, 22-year-old "R. Y." was working on his father's Ulster farm, hoping to get into the Ballymena post office.

Timothy thought the civil service didn't have enough scope for such a likely lad and asked him to go to work at Eaton's London office.

Twenty-five years later when Timothy's son, Sir John Eaton, died young R.Y. took over as president to run the firm until the board of directors decided which of Sir John's sons should be the business.

Their eventual pick, John David Eaton, was only 12 years old when his father died.

R. Y.'s "caretaking" period turned into 20 of the company's most eventful years, their peak the opening of the prestigious College St. store, their depths the Great Depression.

In contrast to colorful Sir John, few anecdotes cluster around R. Y. Eaton.

Eatonians of the period remember him as a tall, seemingly gruff man who kept a close eye on store operations, watching the department of clerks, checking store windows and eagle-eyeing advertising to make sure it was accurate.

R. Y. didn't get much personal

publicity; he didn't want it. Behind the Eaton-tradition merchant—Timothy once called his enterprise just a "bigger general store"—were some unexpected depths: A gentleman-sportsman who kept hunters on his Oriole farm, an esthete and devotee of the arts who was for years president of the Toronto Art Gallery.

For Eaton's and for business in general, the 1920s looked like a wide avenue of expansion into an untroubled future.

In 1923, the firm Timothy Eaton started with a \$6,500 investment had operating profits of \$7,451,000. New stores were opened—Montreal in 1925, Hamilton in 1927, Saskatoon in 1927, Halifax in 1928, Calgary in 1929 and the College St. store in 1930. Others were bought—the Canadian Department Stores, a chain of 20 smaller Ontario stores, in 1928.

Then came the depression and, in 1934 and 1935, Parliament's price spreads inquiry.

The inquiry covered trade and commerce in general, but its first two terms of reference were to investigate the effect of the mass buying practices of department stores on retail trade, and labor conditions in industries supplying department and chain stores.

The department stores came out of the inquiry pretty well. The committee found conditions of employment in department stores and mail order houses compared favorably with retail trade in general—but "this is far from saying that they conform to any advanced standards of employee welfare."

The inquiry meant publication of financial statements which Eaton's—as a privately owned firm—was able before and after to hold closely guarded.

They showed how large the company had grown, and how hard the depression hit.

The book value of Eaton's assets, \$385,000 in 1891, had increased by 1951 to \$107,745,000. Sales, \$22,428,000 in 1907, had increased tenfold by 1929, to \$225,053,000.

But from 1929 to 1933, sales slumped by 40 per cent, to \$132,300,000, still number seven among North American retailers.

Operating profit in 1933 was only \$772,000, compared to the \$7,451,000 of 1923. The Toronto stores had a net loss of \$466,415 on sales of nearly \$35 million.

Paid-out dividends in 1933 were \$195,000, compared to \$940,000 in 1928.



Robert Y. Eaton, cousin of founder Timothy, steered company through depression.

Eaton's slashed wages (as did other firms, of course). At the same time, it argued, it avoided cutting staff. Eaton's employees had jobs.

A comparison of 1924 and 1933 payroll figures illustrates both aspects.

In 1924, the firm had 17,827 employees with a \$25,416,000 payroll.

In 1933, it had 25,736 employees—nearly half again as many as in 1924—but the payroll was \$24,945,000, a half million less than in 1924.

Still, the payroll cut was far less in percentage than the drop in sales and it has been said that Eaton's spent millions to shield employees from unemployment.

Wages went down, John David Eaton says, "but they never hit the bottom."

Eaton's most glittering event of the era was the opening of the Col-

lege St. store, a \$5,000,000 temple of mercantile architecture, in 1930.

Sir John Eaton had been planning the store nearly 20 years before but shelved the idea when World War I broke out.

Original plans called for a central tower 30 storeys high. It was never built.

U.S. literary critic Christopher Morley said the College St. building confirmed his theory that "in modern civilization the department store is the really effective powerhouse of esthetics."

A major feature was the 1,275 capacity Eaton Auditorium, one of the first auditoriums in a department store and believed to be the first ever used outside store hours.

Department stores are partly engaged in show biz, designed to attract and entertain people. Eaton's Santa Claus parade began in 1905, with one horse-drawn wagon carrying Santa Claus atop a huge packing box. Once four small reindeer were brought in from Labrador. (Post-parade, they weren't turned out ungratefully; instead they were kept to gambol on the Islington farm of Eaton vice-president Harry McGee.)

Window and in-store displays have featured penguins, flamingoes, a kangaroo, pigs, sheep, rabbits, chick hatcheries—even a reluctant elephant.

Mohan the Elephant was the subject of a weight-guessing contest. When the moment of truth arrived, he didn't want to get on the scale, even for Eaton's. It took an hour and a half of prodding and coaxing to get him aboard.

More than 50 years ago, an orchestra, suspended from the ceiling in a cut-out "Easter egg," played for spring shoppers.

On a higher and broader level, firm and family have been widely involved in the arts, including employee productions. Soprano Lois Marshall, then working in mail order, scored her first big triumph as the lead in a 1945 employee production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida*.

Eaton Auditorium was R.Y.'s pride.

"Bring the people to Eaton Auditorium, and have them dressed in white tie and tails," he directed. One year, there were seven separate concert series.

In the 1932-33 season, for one series ticket that cost from \$5.50 to \$11 top you could hear five great concert artists, including the pianist Rachmaninoff and violinist Efrem Zimbalist.



Artists and speakers over the years included Helen Traubel, Micha Elman, Artur Rubinstein, Kirsten Flagstad, Lawrence Tibbett, Fritz Kreisler, aviatrix Amelia Earhart, novelist Sinclair Lewis and hundreds more.

The auditorium was also the home of the Kiwanis Music Festival and a centre of social life, with debutante parties and cotillions. Once, a merry-go-round was installed in the adjoining Round Room while dancing was held in the concert hall.

The auditorium was the birthplace of the Promenade Symphony Orchestra, back in the summer of 1932 when a group of unemployed musicians banded together to form what was then known as the Summer Symphony Orchestra.

Meanwhile, Timothy Eaton's grandsons, Sir John Eaton's sons, were growing up.

Not long after Sir John's death in 1922, the three eldest sons went to England for schooling. The eldest, Timothy, was taking college tutoring and hunting with the West Kent Hounds; John David was at Stowe School; Edgar at prep school at Bracknell.

Lady Eaton took young Gilbert and Florence Mary to live, first at Cannes, then in a villa at Florence, first built for Queen Elizabeth of Romania.

She was presented at court in England, and later donned her regalia to show the girls at the Eaton's Girls' Club.

The family returned each summer to Canada, where Lady Eaton continued her participation in company affairs as a director.

In the early 1930s Lady Eaton returned to live permanently at the family's King estate and continue a long and vigorous career ranging from being Joint Master of the Toronto North York Hunt to deep involvement in the arts, education and health fields.

John David Eaton started work at 21 as an Eaton's sales clerk in the men's wear department of the Toronto main store in 1930. He became a director in 1937 and vice-president four years later, at 32.

World War II came, calling away 5,741 Eatonians.

And it broke, temporarily, one Eaton tradition.

For the only time in its history, the firm handled tobacco orders, for servicemen, at the request of the Overseas Tobacco League. But Eaton's returned all tobacco profits to the league.

## The shy Eaton worth \$400 million

★ *The man who owns Eaton's today is John David Eaton, grandson of the founder, Timothy Eaton. This is the last in a series of articles on the 100-year history of Canada's biggest department store.*

During a recent interview with John David Eaton, my tongue slipped and I referred to the "Jaguar" he drives to work from his home on Dunvegan Rd.

John David interrupted quickly and firmly:

"Not a Jaguar, a Mustang."

Before the Mustang, it was a Volkswagen.

John David doesn't like to stand out.

Of course, to a considerable degree, he can't help it. The very rich are watched, stared at, gossiped about.

And John David Eaton is very rich.

He is The Man Who Owns Eaton's—plus the T. Eaton Life Assurance Co., has a partnership in Georgian Bay Airways and a chunk of the Telegram, held in trust for his sons. (Asked if he, the publicity-shy, takes any part in running the newspaper, John David replied simply: "God, no.")

As a child, he lived in a 50-room, 14-bathroom mansion valued at \$300,000 in 1922. Maclean's magazine last year referred to him as the man who all his life has known "what it's like to live in toyland." His worth is estimated at \$400 million or more.

"I'd like to see it," said John David ironically when asked if he was that wealthy. "Total worth is not something I'd worry about. It's really the company, not me."

He regards the family firm, apparently, as something of a trust to be handed on as it was passed on, from his grandfather, founder Timothy Eaton, to his father, Sir John Eaton, to himself.

If John David can't be any-



John David Eaton, the man who owns Eaton's today, is reportedly worth more than \$400 million. But the grandson of founder Timothy Eaton, seen here with his wife, Signy, shuns publicity.

mous, he has still achieved a large degree of privacy.

There is no door to close on the doorway to his unexpectedly simple office on the seventh floor of the Queen St. store. But few reporters have entered it. He shuns cameras. There are thicker clipping files in newspaper libraries on minor-league politicians and small-time entertainers than there is on Canada's number one merchant.

Asked how it feels to be as powerful as he is—he owns an empire which employs 50,000 persons

year-round and another 15,000 at Christmas-time—he snorted:

"If I had all the bloody power, the Eaton Centre would be a going concern" (Eaton's plans for \$300 million development of 23 acres around Queen St. site were withdrawn in 1967 after two years of political and public controversy.)

John David was born to wealth but elected to great wealth. The second of Sir John Eaton's four sons, he was 12 when Sir John died in 1922. Sir John's will directed that

when his youngest son was 27, his executors should select the son best suited to carry on the business and the firm should go to him.

John David went to Stowe School in England and studied languages for two years at Cambridge. Later he said some people "say I left university because I wanted to go to work. But there are others who maintain it was because I wanted to get out of work."

He began working for the family firm in 1930. He's driven a truck, been a clerk in men's furnishings, done comparative shopping.

The press treated him like royalty. Just after John David started in the Toronto main store, Star feature writer R. E. Knowles wrote of his encounter at a men's clothing counter with "this winsome strapping who only two short weeks ago knicked on the armor and began the long battle of what he has chosen as his life career... (he was) rather difficult to talk to, quite lovely so..."

Today, at 59, John David says wryly: "Let's just say I don't relish publicity. I've had my fair share."

Stocky, medium-height, slightly paunchy, he's genial, salty of speech ("leather-lunged bastards," he murmured about the political controversy surrounding the Eaton Centre), given to self-depreciatory irony.

Asked about his deep interest in the Ontario Society for Crippled Children—his initial public appearance was as general chairman of the society's Foundation Fund in 1935 and he has been one of its biggest donors—Eaton replied:

"It's the easiest thing in the world to get involved in. It's a real tear-jerker."

He intends to continue his grandfather's ban on the sale of liquor in Eaton restaurants or tobacco in Eaton stores. "There's not much money in it (tobacco) anyway," John David said with a smile.

Early on, John David was a run-a-way choice to take over Eaton's. His older brother, Timothy, preferred the life of a gentleman farmer-fox-hunter and model railroad builder.

John David went to Winnipeg in 1931 to work for two years. He drove an Auburn roadster, wore a raccoon coat, learned to fly, and met Signy Stefanoski, the daughter of an auto mechanic of Icelandic descent, whom he married in 1933 in Toronto's social event of the season. Since then, he's lived in Toronto.

In 1942, when he was 33 years old, he was named president, and

quickly dispelled any idea he might be a drop-in absentee owner.

Today, "when I'm in Toronto, I'm here (at his office) every day." He rides the escalator to get a glimpse of what's going on. And he tries to visit each of his 48 department stores each year.

A feature of his unpretentious office—a yellow broadloom, mahogany desk—is a model of Hildur, Eaton's ocean-going yacht. (He gave a schooner and a speed boat to the navy and his personal twin-engine Beechcraft to the RCAF in World War II.)

He spends six weeks a year aboard Hildur.

He also likes to get away to Georgian Bay—years ago he bought a 12-acre undeveloped island from the province for \$210—with close friends, with whom he can lounge around in old clothes and talk.

He likes plain food and good whisky, deep-sea trolling, sports. Once he skied to his office after a heavy snowstorm, only to find most of the others didn't make it.

Under John David, Eaton's expanded to all 10 provinces, and into glamorous suburban shopping plazas.

It also introduced new employee schemes: medical insurance, a contributory retirement plan (Eaton's put in \$50 million for past benefits.)

In the early 1950s, big labor unions made a stab at organizing Eaton's in Toronto, with a \$100,000 kitty donated by the United Steel Workers and other unions.

The drive narrowly missed certification. Eaton's, says one union organizer, met at least partially many of the union's points, such as pay raises and pension plan, and with the turnover in the retail sales field, many of those signed up were no longer employees when the certification hearing came.

John David, who says "there's a family feeling about the firm—there must be, so many have been with us so long" (12 per cent of employees are fellow members with him in the Quarter Century Club), says many employees came to manage a firm and said they didn't want a union.

But there have been changes at Eaton's. Some years ago it was clear some of Eaton's policies were old-fashioned and the firm was lagging.

In a shake-up of management and organizational policies, some people went up, some down, some out to early retirement.

John David, a traditionalist in a

changing world and changing business, concedes that on specific things he and the new team "don't always see eyeball to eyeball, of course. We convince each other."

Some troubles in recent years have included the Eaton Centre project. ("Please, please, let's forget about that") and underplanned computerization of billing which brought a swarm of complaints. "I'm trying to forget the damn thing. We'll get over it. We are, actually."

It has been speculated that John David may retire six years from now, when he is 65. His successor would be either of two sons, John Craig, 32, manager of the London store, or Fred, 31, who's in Toronto. A third son, Thor, 27, works in an investment dealer's office and George, 24, is an auto racer.

With the increasing tangle of gift and inheritance taxes, there is speculation Eaton's—which has always been family owned—may become a public company.

"Certainly we think about it, but so far we haven't done anything about it," says John David.

Meanwhile, there is John David, the man who has known "what it's like to live in poverty."

Asked if a writer's assessment of him as shy and somewhat lonely is accurate, John David said: "I think he's probably right."

I asked him about a description of him in his helicopter, hovering over a baseball game to wave at the boys below.

"I wave at everybody," he said.

## Eaton girls (3 and 7) open firm's centennial

Eaton's of Canada, the nation's largest department store chain, celebrated its 100th anniversary today with a gold-key ceremony and 100 thunder flashes at its downtown store.

Hundreds of shoppers had come seeking post-Christmas bar-

gains were able to catch a glimpse of the centennial ceremonies.

John David Eaton, president, and his two granddaughters, Flora Catherine, 3, and Signy Catherine, 7, turned a gold key unlocking the Yonge St. door to mark the occasion. The little girls are great-granddaughters of Timothy Eaton, the store's founder.

Seconds later, the boom of thunder flashes fired at four-second intervals, echoed from the roof of the store.

The detonations of the extra-loud firecrackers could be heard throughout the downtown area.

The ceremonies took place in front of a huge bronze statue of Timothy Eaton. The statue was put up by Eaton employees in 1919.

Today, John David Eaton spoke briefly to 1,200 members of the store's Quarter Century Club and to staff.

He started off by wishing them a Merry Christmas.

Then he corrected himself. "I mean a Happy New Year. That's a good way to start."

He thanked customers and suppliers. "You made this possible. And we hope you'll help us for another 100 years, thank you."

Eaton then pushed a button which illuminated a large six-foot-square "Eaton 100" symbol.

During the coming year, the company will celebrate its centennial with a series of sales and special events.

At today's ceremony, third, fourth and fifth generations of the Eaton family were represented. Fifty years ago today, when the firm marked its golden jubilee, year first, second and third-generation Eatons were on hand.

Members of Eaton's immediate family formed the official party and included: Mrs. J. D. Eaton; Mr. and Mrs. John Craig Eaton and their children, John David Jr., Henry Craig and Signy Catherine; Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick S. Eaton and their two children, Fredrick D'Arcy and Flora Catherine; and the president's two other sons, George and Thor.

Bouquets of red and yellow roses were presented to Mrs. Eaton and the president's two daughters-in-law.

After the ceremony, the first person to shake hands with John David Eaton was a former employee, who didn't identify himself but who had worked with the store from 1913 to 1956.

He spoke with tears in his eyes as he told Eaton: "I'm so proud."





Marking its 100th year, Eaton's of Canada was opened today by two great-great-granddaughters of founder Timothy Eaton, Signy Eaton (left) and Flora Eaton, with a gold key. With them are company president John David Eaton (middle), his wife, and his son John Craig Eaton (at left). Shoppers watched.

He said later that he used to drive a horse and wagon in downtown Toronto delivering paint for Eaton's.

The general public seemed more interested in bargains than in celebrations.

As the ceremonies finished one woman in the crowd said: "Where are the shirts?"

Today's opening occurred half a block north of the spot where Timothy Eaton set up his business Dec. 8, 1869, when he opened the shop he'd bought from James Jennings for \$6,500.

The original Eaton store was on the southwest corner of Yonge and Queen—now occupied by Simpsons.

Ninety-seven years of keen business rivalry was set aside temporarily today when Simpsons, Eaton's biggest rival, took a full-page newspaper advertisement to congratulate Eaton's on the anniversary.

The public was invited to today's ceremony but no special invitations were sent to civic or other dignitaries.

In mid-January celebrations get into full swing, with anniversary decor in place and a canopy over the main entrance showing a replica of the original store.

Store officials are reluctant to go into detail on the year's special events. "This is a very competitive business," said one.

Special sales of 150 items described as "exceptional values" have been planned over the last two years, including what is probably the largest purchase the firm has ever made from one carpet maker.

Throughout the year, Eaton's plans special promotions—fashion shows, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, a Salute to Youth, a Good Old Summertime festival (with barber-shop quartets) and an International Import Fair in October, with most foreign countries participating.

They will lead up to the 100th birthday celebration Dec. 8 and a Victorian-style Christmas.

Through the year, window and interior displays will carry out the old-and-new theme, with a comparison of modern merchandise with old articles collected from Eaton's archives and from places like the Sharon and Simcoe County Museums.

In the spring, one of Eaton's familiar old horsedrawn wagons will again travel city streets.

Next September, a history of the firm will be published.



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